

Collecting

Hooray for Hollywood (Road)

Museums | Ten years ago, Lynn Fung's father set up a gallery for his treasures at the heart of Hong Kong's antiques district. By *Georgina Adam*

Hollywood Road in Hong Kong has become something of a tourist trap, with art galleries and antique shops densely clustered along the steep, narrow road. But it was here, in the late 1970s, that investment banker Peter Fung started haunting the shops and buying furniture and antiques.

According to his daughter Lynn Fung, the collection started when her father went out to acquire a new sofa – but returned with a pair of antique wooden chairs. “My mother wasn’t best pleased, particularly as they were extremely uncomfortable,” she laughs.

But that first purchase sparked in her father a lifelong interest in antique Ming and Qing furniture, vanity cases, Japanese antiques and 18th-century silver, so much so that every Saturday, “rain, shine or typhoon”, Fung went on buying expeditions after a dim sum lunch.

“At the time Hollywood Road was the mecca for antique collectors. In addition, as my father studied engineering,

he is fascinated by how things are put together – so the skill in making antique furniture or vanity cases intrigued him,” Fung says.

Over the decades the Fung home gradually filled with his acquisitions and, as a teenager, Lynn admits, she was rather embarrassed to bring friends home. “They found it spooky to sleep in a Ming six-poster bed that everyone was convinced was haunted.”

Today the collection is one of the world’s foremost assemblies of Ming and Qing huanghuali and zitan (hard woods) furniture. “About 70-80 per cent of the furniture was bought from dealers in the Hollywood Road,” says Fung. So it was natural that when Peter Fung decided to display his treasures – now grown to about 7,000 objects – in his own museum, it was right on that road. He renovated a 1960s building and created four floors of display space: this March marks its 10th anniversary.

Peter Fung’s buying has slowed considerably and the running of the Liang Yi museum has been handed on to



Lynn Fung has taken over the running of the museum which holds her father’s collection — Xiaomei Chen/South China Morning Post

Lynn. She manages it from London, where she is now based. “The timezone means that I can work on the museum in the morning and be with my children [aged four years and 18 months] in the afternoon,” she says. She has not followed in her father’s footsteps as far as collecting is concerned: “Maybe because I grew up with so much, I am more minimalist in my approach.”

But she is hands-on in giving direction to the museum, and one aspect that is important to her is the display. The layout of the museum reflects her taste – “I wanted to give the pieces space,” says Lynn.

“We prize the visitor experience: most of the exhibits can be touched, and visi-



tors are encouraged to sit on the furniture.”

You have to book a visit, and docents are there to explain. There are even handling workshops open to small groups for the most delicate objects.

“My father wants recognition for Chinese furniture alongside other crafts, and, it must be said, that as a businessman he is also aware of its value as an investment,” she says. “I can’t affirm that the physical space will survive for-

‘Most of the exhibits can be touched, and visitors are encouraged to sit on the furniture’

A huanghuali canopy bed, English silverware and antique wooden lounge chairs are highlights of the Liang Yi museum — Courtesy Liang Yi museum



ever; as with most families we don’t really discuss that aspect of the future, but we certainly don’t intend to sell anything.”

She is partnering with museums outside Hong Kong and currently working on a show themed around antique boxes, to be held in Hangzhou in early 2025. She is also excited about working on a joint exhibition with the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio; they will pair their Old Master paintings with Liang Yi’s Chinese furniture for a three-city tour in China starting in September.

I ask her how difficult it is to promote a museum that shows works that are not – I choose my word carefully – “trendy”, in an art world fixated on Modern and contemporary art. She gently corrects the word “trendy” to “timeless” and explains: “That is my mission as a steward of the collection, to make these beautiful pieces relevant and interesting to today’s generation and the following ones.”

liangyimuseum.com

Around Tefaf More delights from east Asia



Europe has long been fascinated by Asian culture and aesthetics, as Michael Goedhuis makes clear on his stand. He is showing 17th-18th-century Edo-period sculptural objects, such as this flying handle bronze flower vessel, a demonstration of Japanese design’s influence on Art Nouveau and Art Deco. A contemporary example is a triptych on kozuke paper by the British artist Emilie Pugh, a student of Chinese art, which contains a remarkable 86,400 burnt holes, representing the seconds in a day. michaelgoedhuis.com AJ

Courtesy the gallery

Tanakaya gallery is showcasing a rare woodblock print by Hokusai, “The Amida Falls in the Far Reaches of the Kiso Road” (c1832) from his *Waterfalls in Various Provinces* series. A master of ukiyo-e (“floating world pictures”), Hokusai’s portrayal of the Amida falls, one of Japan’s natural wonders, used a stark yellow and indigo palette that marked a modern departure from earlier prints. The gallery also offers a selection of 20th-century Japanese prints and paintings. tanakaya.fr Alexander James

Courtesy the gallery



Highlights of Joost van den Bergh’s booth are three works by painter, teacher and curator Jiro Yoshihara, the founder of the influential Gutai art movement of the late 1950s and 1960s. Their work encompassed performance, painting and installation, prioritising concept and process over form and the object. One of his pieces, with its bright slashes of ink on paper, is characteristic of their philosophy, which leaves the trace of action evident in the work. joostvandenbergh.com

AJ — Courtesy the gallery

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